

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COLOMB 01443 230622Z

41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 ACDA-07 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01

XMB-02 FAA-00 DOTE-00 OPIC-03 AID-05 IGA-02 /109 W

----- 065808

R 221031Z APR 76 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1443

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 1443

ROME FOR RCAA

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: EAIR, MV

SUBJECT: JOINT VENTURE IN MALDIVES

REF: AKA) COLOMBO 1387 (NOTAL) (B) SINGAPORE 1901 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY : SINGAPORE-BASED US FIRM, TRI-9 CORPORATION
USA HAS SIGNED PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT TO ASSUME 49 PERCENT
EQUITY ASHARE IN AIR MALDIVES, TWO-AIRCRAFT LINE OWNED BY
GOVERNMENT OF MALDIVES (GOM). TRI-9 ALSO PLANNING TO PRESENT
PROPOSAL FOR OPERATING FORMER RAF AIR BASE ON MALDIVES'
GAN ISLAND AS COMMERCIAL AIRPORT/TOURIST RESORT. IT MAY
REQUEST HELP FROM OPIC AND DOD IF PROPOSAL GOES THROUGH.
ALTHOUGH THIS MIGHT SOLVE PROBLEM POSED BY BRITISH WITHDRAWAL
FROM GAN, PLANS COULD ALSO CREATE POLLTICAL PROBLEMS
IN US/MALDIVIAN RELATIONS IF US MILITARY USES MALDIVIA B
FACILITIES EVEN INDIRECTLY. EMBASSY REQUESTS BACKGROUND
INFORMATION ON TRI-9. END SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 COLOMB 01443 230622Z

2. THREE DIRECTORS OF TRI-9 CORPORATION USA, US

CORPORATION WITH SEASIAN OFFICES AT 1 TAVIRIND ROAD, SINGAPORE 28, LED BY STEPHEN SHERMAN APRIL 20 DISCUSSED WITH EMBOFF THEIR AGREEMENT WITH AIR MALDIVES (COPY PROVIDED TO EMBASSY) AND THEIR FUTURE PLANS. ACCORDING TOSEXT OF THIS "PRELIMINARY" AGREEMENT, TRI-9 WILL ACQUIRE "49 PERCENT EQUITY OWNERSHIP OF AIR MALDIVES FOR CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS EQUALLING 98 PERCENT OF PRESENT NET WORTH OF AIR MALDIVES." WE WERE TOLD AMOUNT INVOLVED IS APPROXIMATELY \$299,000.49 PERCENT OWNERSHIP CANNOT BE EXCEEDED. TRI-9 WILL ASSUME MANAGERIAL AND OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR AIRLINE, FUNCTION PRESENTLY PERFORMED BY SRI LANKA AIR FORCE.

3. TRI(9'S FUTURE PLANS FALL INTO TWO PARTS. FIRST IS REFUR-BISHING AND UPGRADING EXISTING TWO AIR MALDIVES CONVAIR 440 AIRCRAFT WHICH ARE NOW USED TO FERRY TOURISTS FROM COLOMBO TO MALE ATOLL RESORT ISLANDS. IT WOULD PLAN TO ASSUME CONTROL OVER AIR MALDIVES BY OCTOBER 1, 19(AND LOOKS TO POSSIBLE INTERNATIO UGQRUNS WITH LARGER AIRCRAFT (DC-8 WAS MENTIONED) AT LATER DATE.

4. SECOND PART OF PLAN INVOLVES PROPOSAL, WHICH TRI-9 EXPECTS TO PRESENT TO GOM BY MAY 15,FOR USE OF FORMER BRITISH RAF BASE ON GAN ISLAND IN SOUTHERN-MOST ADDU ATTRL. CORPORATION OFFICALS HAD JUST COMPLETED SURVEY TRIP TO GAN AND EXPRESSED ENTHUSIASM OVER COMMERCIAL PROSPECTS FOR GAN FACILITIES AND WERE THINKING OF TAKING CONTROL OF THEM BY SEPTEMBER 1 OR EARLIER.ACCORDING TO THEM, ONE ASPECT WOULD BE OPERATING FAN AS COMMERCIAL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO ACCOMMODATE AIRLINES, EITHER CHARTER/CARGO OR REGULARLY-SCHEDULED, PERHAPS ON SOUTH AFRICA/HONG KONG ROUTE.AIRPFUT MIGHT ALSO VE USED BY CHARTER AIRCRAFT BRINGING PACKAGE TOURS TO MALDIVES WHICH PRESENTLY USE COLOMBO. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY ARE PACKAGE TOURS USING GACPM THESE WOULD USE RENOVATED RAF BARRACKS AND FACILITIES, WHICH WE ARE TOLD

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 COLOMB 01443 230622Z

INCLUDE GOLF COURSE. GAN FACILITIES CAN ALSO BE USED AS SHIP-BUNKERING PORT.TRI-9 OFFICERS INDICATED THEY ARE ALSO HOPING TO GET "CORROSION WORK" FROM USAF FOR WHICH FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE AT GAN AND ARE HOPEFUL R&R FLIGHTS FROM DIEGO GARRAT MIGHT ALSO BE POSSIBILITY. THEY ALSO INDICATED THEY PLANNED TO APPLY FOR OPIC INSURANCE TO COVER INVESTMENT IN AIR MALDIVES.

5. COMMENT: IF TRI-9'S OPTIMISM IS JUSTIFIED, GOM'S PROBLEM OF WHAT TO DO WITH FORMER RAF FACILITIES ON GAN COULD BE SOLVED (/23*53) -. BASIC QUESTION, HOWEVER, IS WHETHER AIR AND SHIPPING TRAFFIC THAT MIGHT BE INDUCED TO USE GAN FACILITIES WILL COVER OPERATION COSTS WHICH TRI-9 OFFICERS ESTIMATE AT \$60,000 PER MONTH. ALSO, THOUGHTS OF DOING USAF WORK AND ESTABLISHING CONNECTIONS WITH DIEGO CARCIA MIGHT CREATE POLITICAL PROBLEMS FOR MALDIVIAN GOVERNMENT AND FOR USG.

6. ACTION REQUESTED : ASHFRI-9 OPERATIONS IN MALDIVES COULD EFFECT USG-GOM RELATIONS, EMBASSY REQUESTS DEPARTMENT AND SINGAPORE PROVIDE US ANY AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON RELIABILITY AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY OF TRI-9 CORPORATION USA. OPIC AND DOD MIGHT ALSO BE ALERTED THAT TRI-9 CORPORATION OFFICERS MAY APPROACH THEM FOR ASSISTANCE IN AIR MALDIVES/GAN OPERATION.
KAY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL AVIATION, JOINT VENTURES, MILITARY BASES, AVIATION AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976COLOMB01443
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760160-0229
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760435/aaaabdif.tel
Line Count: 136
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <23 AUG 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JOINT VENTURE IN MALDIVES
TAGS: EAIR, MV, SN, US, TRI-9 CORPORATION, AIR MALDIVES
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006